

SCRIPT TALK

September 2009 Volume # 37 Issue # 156



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Fall Scrip Show
October 2 & 3
Pikeville, KY

Big Elkhorn Coal Co.
Betsy Layne, KY
Edkins KY 249-A25 R-10

BUYING

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DRY BRANCH, WVA, 845, (KANAWHA) *got*

Dry Branch Coal Co./ 5/ Dry Branch, W. Va.
15 NP 19 Rd Sd MM

McCOMAS, WVA, 1837, (MERCER) *got*

Thomas Coal Co. No. 1 / 100
C100b Ni 35 Rd MM

HIAWATHA, WVA, 1315, (MERCER) *got*

Ennis C. & C. Co. / 50
E-50b Ni 30 Rd Co ICS

PHICO, WVA, 2211, (LOGAN) *got*

Winisle Coal Corp. / 1/ Wcc / Philco, W. Va.
E1b Fr 21 Oct Co Orco Reg. U. S. Pat. Off

COOPERS, WVA, 655, (MERCER) *got*

Mill Creek C. & C. Co. / 10 / Coopers, W. Va.
B10 NP *(31)* Rd Co ICS
21

WIDEMOUTH, WVA, 3021, (MERCER) *got*

The American Coal Co. / 1
A1 Br 17 Rd Co In Trade / 1 /Ingle / System / Pat. Apr. 7, 1914

MAHAN, WVA, 1745, (FAYETTE) *got*

Christian Colliery Co. / 25 / Not Transferable / Mahan, W. Va.
C25c N 24 Rd Co Orco Reg. U. S. Pat. Off

SPRIGG, WVA, 2637, (MINGO) *got*

Alma Fuel Company / 5 /Sprigg, W. Va.
E5b N 19 Rd Co Orco Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

SWISS, WVA, 2735, (NICHOLAS) *got*

Swiss Supply Co. / 10 / Swiss, W. Va.
A10 *(Br)* 21 Rd Co ICS
NP

KINGMONT, WVA, 1521, (MARION) *got*

The Va. & Pittsburgh Coal & Coke Co. / 100
A100 Br 35 Rd Co ICS

DOBRA CAMP, WVA, 804, (BOONE) *got*

Boone County Coal Corp / No 10 / 10
A10 N 20 Rd Co ICS

INTERESTING MINING MONEY

Shortly after the end of the Civil War, a new and very unusual type of token made its appearance. Referred to by collectors as shell cards or embossed shell cards, they were produced between 1867 and the end of the 1870s. As the name suggests, they were made of a shell construction with a paper filling between the two halves and an overlapping metal rim to hold the two sides together. A man by the name of Henry H. Browne of Mount Vernon patented the process in June, 1868, but the tokens were manufactured by several different companies.

On most known shell cards one side consists of a piece of embossed brass, with either a piece of cardboard or a second piece of embossed brass on the other side. Typically, one side (the reverse) has either an embossed imitation of a twenty dollar gold coin or a Liberty seated silver dollar. The obverse side has the issuing merchant's advertisement, and is either embossed brass or, more commonly, a printed piece of cardboard. Some pieces were made with a mirror on one side and an embossed brass advertisement on the other. Most shell cards are approximately the size of a U.S. silver dollar.

Having read this far you might be wondering what this has to do with mining. Well, one company, the Crescent Coal & Salt Company of West Columbia, West Virginia is known to have issued embossed shell cards. Listed by Edkins as WV 2984-A10, the token is 26mm and made of gilt brass. Many shell cards were manufactured with a gilt finish over brass, to give them the appearance of gold, but this plating was very light and would quickly wear off. The token cataloged by Edkins was circulated and no evidence of the gilt remained, so it is described as being brass.

The Columbia Coal & Salt Company piece is quite a bit smaller than the typical shell card. This small size is very logical when it is considered that it has a denomination and was intended as a substitute for official coinage. Most shell cards were issued to advertise a product or service, and therefore do not have an expressed value.

Not much is known about the company. It is not listed in my 1875 Dunn directory, or my 1883 *The Coal Mines of the United States*. Very likely it was a short-lived enterprise, as were so many of the companies of that era. While doing research I found reference to it in the Athens Messenger of Athens, Ohio. From the May 23 1878 issue we learn that "Colonel John Clarkson, lessee of the Crescent Coal and Salt Works at West Columbia, recently, called upon one of his clerks, named Frank Williams, to shoot a colored steam-boat hand who had incensed him by rolling a barrel of salt through a pool of water while in the act of loading on the boat, the shooting was accordingly deliberately and artistically done, the ball entering a lung of the colored man; and now the shooter and the instigator are both under bonds to answer at court for the villainous outrage."

One has to wonder why a coal company would have embossed shell cards manufactured. I imagine it was a more expensive process than having a brass or nickel token struck, and yet the finished product was not nearly as durable as a metal token would be.

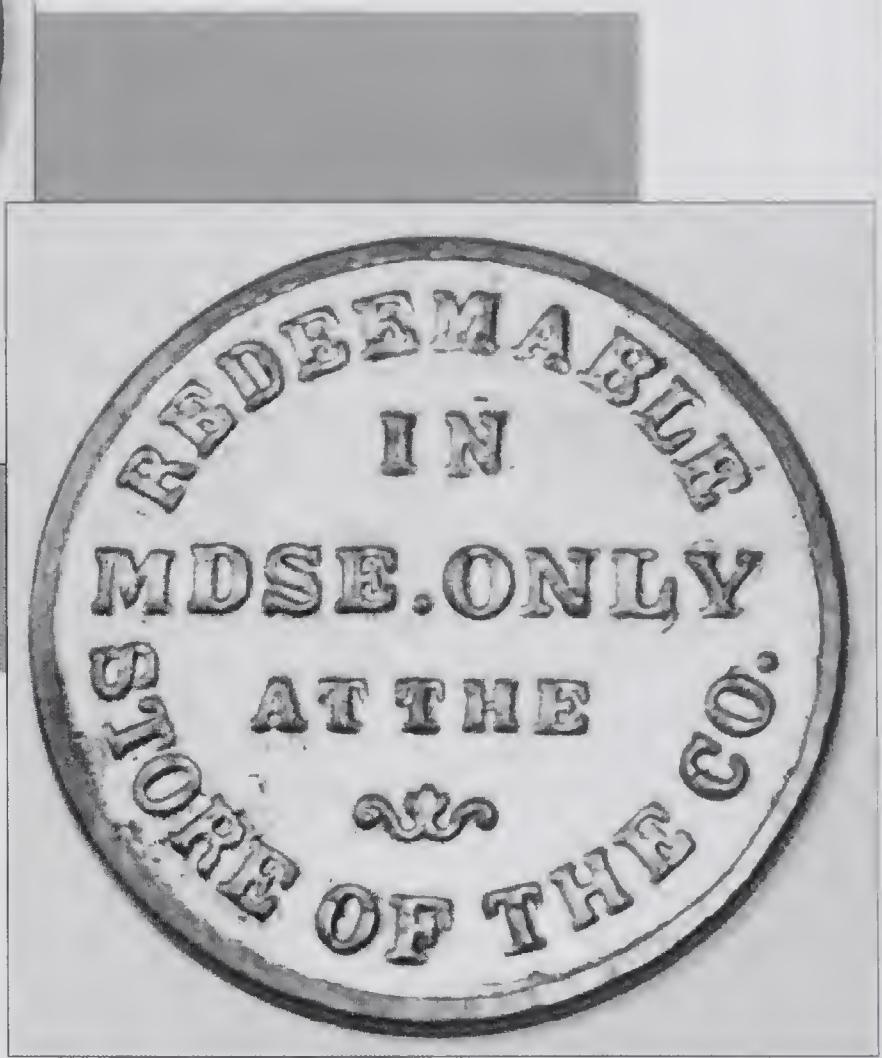
I have been told that a 5 Cents denomination exists of this token, but I have not seen one. Certainly it makes sense that the company would have had more than one denomination produced. I would be interested in hearing from anyone owning one of these tokens in any denomination.

(This new, possibly regular, column will discuss various unusual tokens or paper scrip used by mining companies. Comments or questions may be emailed to me at dave@turtlehillbanjo.com)

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DAVE SCH HAS taken

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The S Counter Stamp

Lake Superior Coal Company Superior, West Virginia

Jay Chatman

McDowell County Coal & Railroad Historian

In 1913, Middle States Coal & Coke Company in Huger, West Virginia, was bought out by a steel company in Canada for \$55,000. After that the name was changed to Lake Superior Coal Company, Superior, West Virginia. The coal would be shipped to Canada across Lake Superior, hence the name Lake Superior Coal Company. In later years the company name would be changed to Cannelton Industries.

I was born at home in 1949 in an area the coal company called String Town. From 1946 to 1963 my father, John F. Chatman, Jr., worked as a motorman and my mother, Opal Chatman, worked in the company store as a clerk. My father was disabled in 1963 and the coal company store was closed during that same year.

One day, in the spring of 1960, I came home from Superior-Maitland Grade School to find an entire collection of Lake Superior Coal Company scrip on the front porch. My father told me they were cleaning out the old Superior Post Office and found the scrip stored there. Being a 10 year-old, I began to play with the scrip like it was play money. We kept it for a while until a few collectors came by and acquired it from my Father.

As I got older, I found out what scrip was and how it was used by talking to older folks that worked at the company store. One person in particular was the store butcher, Carl "Butch" Newman. He talked about the miners going to the pay office and cutting, or receiving, whatever the amount of scrip each miner needed as an advance on the next payday. The amount was entered on each individual's scrip card to be deducted from their regular payday.

From the early 1920's to 1963, the store manager was E. R. Jackson. In the conversations I had with him and Mr. Newman they told me about the first company store, an all wood structure, burning down around 1926. In 1930, the coal company built a new brick company store and a brick combination post office and mine office. The cost of both structures was \$19,000.

Due to the fire, all of the Lake Superior Coal Company scrip was collected and brought to the mine office. They thought someone had looked through the

store's remains after the fire and had picked up some of the scrip. To keep anyone from using that stolen scrip, they put a new counter stamp on each piece. There were several different S counter stamps used to speed the process along.

There were probably a lot of different reasons to counter stamp scrip, but this is an explanation of how and why the S counter stamp was put on the Lake Superior Coal Company scrip.

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Lake Superior Coal Company Store
Circa 1925

Photo courtesy of Jay Chatman, the Huger Collection

From the President:

If you have paid attention to the last two Scrip Talks, you will see that the *NSCA Fall Scrip Show* is listed as being October 3 & 4. This is in error as **the correct dates are October 2 & 3** (Friday and Saturday).

I have been in contact with the Landmark Inn (606-432-2545) and have been assured that the **October 2nd and 3rd** date are the ones we have reserved.

The motel is supposed to give you the right date if you call for a room but if you have already reserved a room, you will want to check the date.

I regret this error and hope no one is inconvenienced by it.

Looking for a good show in Pikeville, KY, on **October 2 & 3**. See you there.

Tell everyone you see of this correct date.

Jim

NSCA Free Ads for Members

Free Ads are available to N.S.C.A. members at no charge. The only requirements being that they are limited to 4 lines, one ad per issue. You may send up to four different ads in one mailing. Deadline for Free Ads is three weeks after the postmark of the current issue of SCRIP TALK. All ads received after the deadline will be held for the following issue. No ad will rerun automatically, each issue will require a separate request. Paid ads should be sent to SCRIP TALK Editor and NOT the Free Ad Editor. SEND ALL FREE ADS TO: Steve Ratliff, N.S.C.A. Free Ad Editor, 1717 Saint Marys Bay Drive, Milton, Florida 32583-7343. More and more scriptors are using the convenience of email to submit their ads; send to Steve@Ratliff.com {Note: + at the end of your ad indicates you need to renew it.}

WILL PAY \$50.00 FOR ANY TOKEN ON MY R1 THRU R5 WV WANT LIST. Will mail list on request. Billy Campbell, 125 Cambridge Trail, Madison, AL 35758 bwcok@knology.net +

WANTED: WEST VIRGINIA MERCHANT TRADE TOKENS, lumber scrip, encased cents, and Greenbrier County Coal Scrip Donald Clifford, P.O. Box 65, St. Albans, WV 25177-0065 email CLFF635@aol.com +

TOP DOLLARS PAID FOR CARBIDE CAP LAMPS, oil wick/lard lamps, blasting cap tins, scatter tags, carbide lamp parts and other small mining artifacts that I may need in my collection. I will pay more than anyone for items needed for my collection. Contact Larry Click, 1021 N. Jefferson St., Arlington, VA 22205-2454, 703-241-3748 or email LarryClick@msn.com

FLORIDA TOKENS WANTED – FLORIDA TOKENS OF ALL TYPES WANTED. Send 61¢ stamp for free sample of Florida Token Society's newsletter, TOKENNEWS and request free Florida token. Check out the Florida Token Society web site: <http://www.steve.ratliff.com/fts/> - you can join and pay dues on-line! Steve Ratliff, 1717 Saint Marys Bay Drive, Milton, FL 32583-7343 Steve@Ratliff.com check out my EBay sales, many pieces of coal scrip. All starting at 99 cents. Search florida-token-collector, be sure to click box for "Include title and description."

WANTED: MOUNDSVILLE SUPPLY COMPANY, Moundsville, WV #1981-A1 – A5. Write or call. Charles Miller, 200W-900N, Wawaka, IN 46794 260-336-5130 +

I HAVE THE FOLLOWING TOKENS TO SELL OR TRADE: (ask for list) Good For KY, OH, TN, MI, ID, and NE. Coal Tokens: WV, KY, TN, & AL. Lumber tokens, exploders and scatter tags. Gene Miller, 3306 Startan Ct., Louisville, KY 40220

WANT YOUR NORTH CAROLINA TOKENS I will send a check with self addressed, postage paid shipper. You only need to insert tokens, tape up well and mail. Bob King, 709 Cardinal Drive, Brevard, NC 28712 828-883-8028 tokenaddict@citcom.net +